

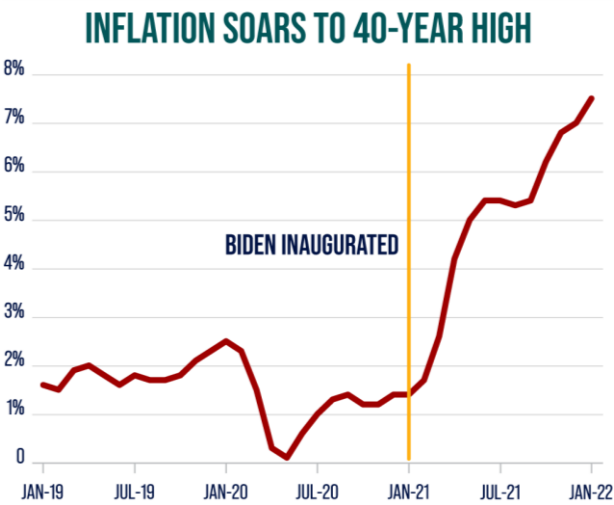
The State of the Union

Are you better off than you were a year ago?

Soaring Prices Strain Family Budgets

Consumer prices [jumped](#) 7.5% in January from one year earlier, the highest inflation rate since 1982. Families are paying more to put food on the table, with whole milk prices up 8.2% in January from one year ago. Prices have soared 18.1% for bacon and 13.1% for eggs.

Inflation began to climb soon after President Biden took office, with the steepest gains coming as Democrats pumped another \$2 trillion into the already recovering economy last spring. Moody's Analytics [estimates](#) that inflation is now costing a typical household an extra \$276 each month.



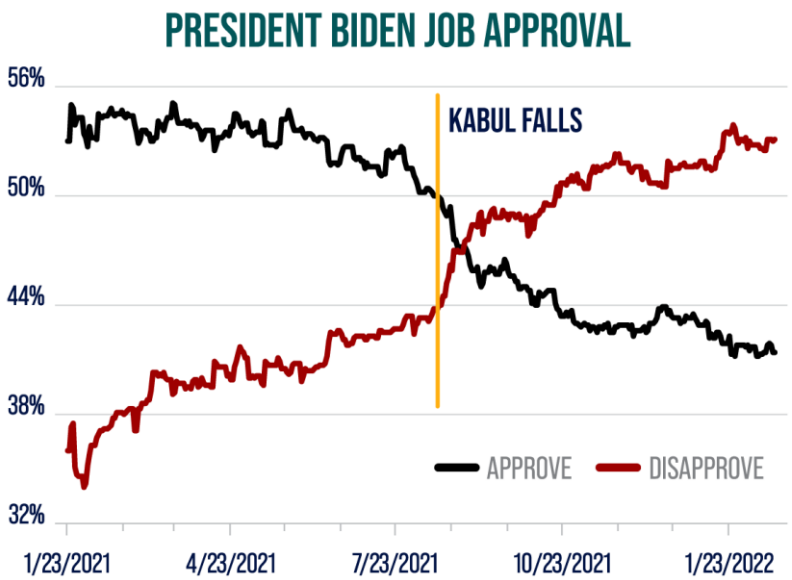
Gas Prices Poised to Hit \$4 per Gallon

Among President Biden's first actions in office were to [revoke](#) the permit for construction of the Keystone XL pipeline and [prohibit](#) new oil and gas leases on federal lands and waters. Aimed at reducing the amount of oil produced and consumed in the United States, theSoase policies helped spur a predictable rise in the price of gasoline at the pump.

Gas [prices](#) are up 40% from this time a year ago and are [predicted](#) to top \$4 a gallon. In desperation, some Democratic lawmakers now want to suspend federal gas taxes, which account for just 5% of the average [cost](#) of a gallon of gas.

WITH APPROVAL PLUMMETING, BIDEN TRIES TO DODGE BLAME

President Joe Biden's job approval rating has declined precipitously since he took office a year ago – now [averaging](#) a dismal 41%, with 53% disapproving.



In a recent CNN [survey](#), 57% of respondents said they considered the first year of the Biden administration to be a failure. When asked in an NBC [poll](#) whether the president has performed better, worse, or just as expected, only 5% said better, and a whopping 36% said worse. Democrats confused their slim majorities with a mandate for their radical progressive agenda, and now they are looking to [share](#) the blame. Voters clearly have not been fooled.

Experts: Pandemic Closures Taking a Toll on Students

Thousands of schools [cancelled](#) classes or went virtual in January, weeks after President Biden said schools wouldn't have to close "because of a case of COVID-19." Studies show that repeated school closures over the past two years have left students scrambling to catch up on lost learning. Poor and minority students have been hit especially hard. McKinsey & Company [found](#) that students at schools where the average family income is below \$25,000 started this school year about 12 months behind in math. Young people's mental health has suffered from the increased social isolation as well. Children's hospitals saw mental health emergencies for 5- to 17-year olds [jump](#) by 14% in the first half of 2021 compared to 2019.

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Crime Surges Across America

Homicides, theft, gun assaults rise

America’s cities remain gripped in a crime wave that began in 2020 as Democrats demanded governments defund the police, abolish ICE, and stop prosecuting crimes. A [report](#) from the Council on Criminal Justice found homicides increased by 5% in 2021, motor vehicle theft rose by 14%, and gun assaults by 8%. At least 16 major cities broke records for the number of murders last year.

Fraternal Order of Police National Vice President Joe Gamaldi [says](#) the rise in crime is “a result of rogue prosecutors and activist judges who have created a revolving door criminal justice policy in all of these major cities” and “it’s even worse in the cities that decided to defund their police departments.”

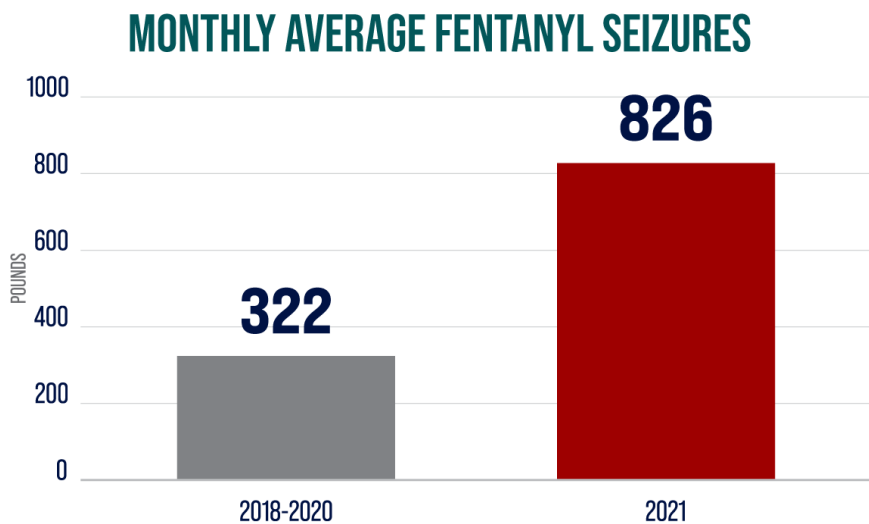
Energy Costs Leave Americans Cold

President Biden and Democrats in Congress have stood by as energy costs have [climbed](#) for months. Energy [prices](#) are up 27% since last year, with electricity rising 10.7% for the year and up 4.2% in the last month. An estimated 40% of U.S. households rely on [electricity](#) to heat their homes in the winter.

A [study](#) by Help Advisor found that 20% of Americans struggled to cover their energy bills in 2021. Republicans have called for policies that would support more affordable, reliable American energy. Democrats continue to push [policies](#) that threaten to drive prices even higher, and then [pitch](#) more inflationary government spending to subsidize the higher bills that result.

Biden’s Southern Border Crisis Threatens Public Health and Safety

The Biden administration’s southern border crisis [led](#) to a massive increase in the flow of lethal drugs, threatening public health and safety. Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids have become the leading cause of overdose deaths in the United States. Between October 2020 and September 2021, there were 64,749 [reported](#) deaths.



In 2021, U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized nearly 10,000 pounds of fentanyl at the southern border, more than a 40% increase from 2020. On average, authorities intercepted 826 pounds of the lethal drug per month last year on the border, two and a half times as much as the monthly average in the previous three years.

HOMELAND SECURITY

2 Million Cross the Border in Biden’s First Year

In President Biden’s first year in office, he moved to end [effective](#) border policies, leading to a [surge](#) of people at the southern border. In 2021, U.S. officials encountered more than 2 million people trying to cross into the United States illegally. The surge created a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions and helped fuel an increase in the smuggling of deadly drugs such as fentanyl.

DEFENSE

BIDEN IGNORED ADVICE IN ABANDONING AFGHANISTAN

The Biden administration’s [hasty](#) withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, seemingly placed politics ahead of military advice. In January 2021, months before the president decided to pull out, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction warned that the Afghan air force would collapse without critical American aid, training, and maintenance.

When the president went ahead with his plan anyway, Afghanistan quickly fell to Taliban terrorists. The [disastrous](#) evacuation of Americans was reminiscent of Vietnam, leaving thousands of citizens and allies stranded and 13 U.S. service members dead.

UNPROVOKED RUSSIAN WAR IN UKRAINE CASTS SHADOW OVER EUROPE AND NATO

Russian President Vladimir Putin ignored diplomacy and launched an unprovoked invasion of Ukraine last week, violating the sovereignty of another country, [threatening](#) our NATO allies, and enveloping Europe in the largest land war since World War II. Global energy prices immediately spiked and capital markets dropped due to the news. Americans will feel the effects of the conflict as global trade and supply chains are further strained by Putin’s aggression. Authoritarians around the globe are watching how the U.S. responds to this crisis to see if they too can get away with wanton aggression toward their neighbors.

